

1991

## Workers' Party Report : Autumn 1991

The Workers Party

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### Recommended Citation

The Workers Party, "Workers' Party Report : Autumn 1991" (1991). *Materials*. 118.  
<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/workerpmat/118>

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## An Effective Voice in the Dáil

Independent commentators are agreed that the performance and calibre of contribution of Workers' Party TDs are amongst the highest in Dáil Éireann. The leading contributor in the Dáil for the previous year, according to a *Sunday Tribune* survey, 21st October 1990, was Deputy Pat Rabbitte. Inside are brief excerpts from some of his contributions on the Economy and Employment, Tallaght Regional Hospital, the PESP, Cheeverstown House, Crime and Vandalism, Local Government, the Beef Industry, the closure of Post Offices, increasing Bank Charges...

It was a year that badly tarnished the self-proclaimed 'economic miracle' of the FF/PD Coalition government who have now been reduced to blaming "returning emigrants" for unemployment reaching 250,000. Selling off successful state companies like Irish Life and Irish Sugar did not prevent a new round of cuts which will impact most severely on those needing health care, social welfare and access to education. As a result of persistent questioning by Pat Rabbitte in the Dáil, the Minister for Health eventually admitted on 7th February 1991 that Government had shelved the Tallaght Regional Hospital. No significant progress was made, despite the promises, at Dáil Reform and the number of sitting days remain the worst by any Parliament in Europe. Meanwhile the Workers' Party have used the

Dáil and the European Parliament to focus attention on the real problems confronting Irish society. We played a leading role in the campaign to elect a young radical woman, Mrs Mary Robinson, President of Ireland. In the recent local elections, the Workers' Party fought for an extension of local democracy and made gains. In the Dáil we tabled a Bill for the amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution and argued for a positively neutral Ireland seeking peace in the world and campaigning for a cleaner environment and against the nuclear threat exemplified by Sellafield. Locally, we published "Aiming High" a major submission for a high-status Regional College, and opposed threats to the Green Belt.

Active, effective representation — that's the Workers' Party.

## THANK YOU!



Thanks to all who supported Workers' Party candidates at the recent Local Elections.

Both of our outgoing Councillors — **Don Tipping** and **Pat Rabbitte** — were re-elected, and with **Mick Billane** topping the poll in Tallaght/Rathcoole, this meant an increase in WP Councillors for Tallaght.

In **Clondalkin**, **Donna Conlon's** fourth place highlighted again the scandalous under-representation of that area on the Council; the Clondalkin three-seater has more voters than every four-seat constituency in Dublin.

The Terenure ward saw **Deirdre O'Connell** improving on the WP vote in the last local elections.

Again, thanks to our supporters. The bigger Workers' Party Council team will now tackle the issues you raised during the campaign. On the back of this leaflet are listed our advice centres — be assured that we will report back to you. Workers' Party Councillors work for you, and not just at election time.

**Annual Collection now on**



# WHAT'S ANOTHER YEAR?

Second annual re

Pat Rabbitte speaking...



## AN POST

"We have to ask why were An Post allowed to get into the sorry state they are in now.

An Post are totally undercapitalised. For example, their capacity to raise money from small savers in terms of making a contribution to the domestic sourcing of our national debt has been completely ignored.

If this battle has to be won it will be won by the workers in An Post and by the people and local communities who are threatened in this case. With 250,000 people unemployed, we cannot afford to wantonly allow another 1,500 people and the postal service to be undermined. It is a matter for management to manage the postal service back to health."

12 JUNE 1991

## P.E.S.P.

"The Workers' Party has traditionally supported the concept of central bargaining. However, it is the actual content of the bargain that matters.

The pay terms are conditional on "economic and commercial circumstances" and the floating 3% will prove illusory for many thousands of workers. The supposed bias in favour of the lower paid is almost negligible. There is no commitment to a statutory minimum wage.

If we are seriously concerned about addressing the question of the social wage, we must seek national bargaining rights with those who can deliver on the elements which make up such a concept. However, the concept of the social wage is undermined by the refusal to address tax reform. There are no new innovative proposals for job creation and we are asked to settle for a target that accepts a standstill in the present horrific unemployment situation."

20 FEBRUARY 1991

## CHILD

## BENEFIT



"As I read the derisory increase in child benefit, it means that a family with more than three children will receive an increase of £7.10 per month which probably works out at 24p a day; that is the level of increase in child benefit. How, in God's name, can that be made out to be a budget taking into account the interests of people in the lower income categories?"

31 JAN. 1991

## TAXATION

"It may be claimed by the Government that there is an objective to reduce the standard rate of tax to 25 per cent by 1933. I dispute vehemently that such a move constitutes real tax reform or a strategy on personal taxation....

The reduction in the 23 per cent VAT rate was a result of imminent harmonisation, so the Minister concedes £98 million with one hand and takes back £61 million with the other hand by increasing the 10 per cent rate to 12.5 per cent. The latter measure is especially regrettable since it will aggravate the marginal position of low income groups."

31 JANUARY 1991

## REGIONAL HOSPITAL

"I notice the Minister's reaffirmation of the assurances he has given to the Adelaide concerning the maintenance of the legal and medical procedures that the hospital has for so many years carried out in the city....

The people of Tallaght, Clondalkin, Walkinstown, Rathcoole and the surrounding region have greeted with disbelief, shock and dismay the reply given by the Minister for Health, Dr. O'Hanlon, to my parliamentary question last Thursday when he stated, 'the building of the new Tallaght hospital will not commence in 1991'.

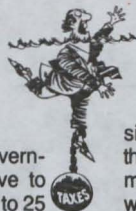
I remind the House that a Government backbencher withdrew his support from the Government because of the closure of one of three hospitals in the city of Limerick....

Only last Saturday I had to leave my advice centre early in order to bring a mother and her child to the Children's Hospital after the child had pulled down a frying pan on top of himself. The alternative that mother had was that she would wait to take two buses.

I was assured in reply to regular parliamentary questions, for example, on 6 March 1990 that "construction will commence in 1991". Again, on 29 November 1990 I was assured that the Minister had received 'a list of selected tenderers for approval'....

The deferral was elicited by way of parliamentary question from me; otherwise we would have got past the local elections without the matter being made public.

The appointment of Deputy Flood, I



sincerely hope that his presence at the Department will mean that commitment to a date when construction work can start will be announced immediately. It is an urgent issue in an area that is badly affected by unemployment and where there are so many young families who need regular access to hospital care."

29 NOVEMBER 1990

+ 12 FEB. + 13 JUNE 1991

## MENTAL HANDICAP SERVICES

"I thank the Chair for permitting me to raise the urgent question of the crisis in our mental handicap services. Although the Minister for Health has, on his desk since last summer, a major report on mental handicap he has refused to publish this report.

This is a crisis. It is one dimension of the health services where the Minister has not managed to protect the service and where parents are driven now to marching on the streets."

29 NOVEMBER 1990

## CRIME

"An environment of fear is being created by a very small number of criminal families who are known to the gardaí but in the view of the residents, are not being effectively prosecuted by the gardaí....

There is no accountability to the people and consequently Dublin Corporation are seen to be neglectful and careless about housing allocation and management.

Dublin south-west urgently needs additional Garda resources....

Suitable remedial detention centres must be opened for young offenders. Will the Minister comment on whether he thinks a new offences against the person Bill may be necessary having regard to the fact that the existing legislation has been on the Statute Book for 130 years?"

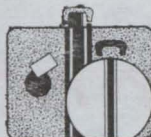
17 APRIL 1991

## INDUSTRIAL POLICY

"I have spoken on other occasions about my regret that despite the worsening financial crisis, and especially despite the spiralling unemployment, we have not managed in the lifetime of this Government to have a debate on industrial strategy. Report after report has highlighted the weakness in strategy and has queried whether we are getting value for money."

5 JULY 1991





## EMIGRATION

"The Minister pleads helplessness because the traditional safety valve of emigration is no longer available. It is an indictment of our management of this economy that between 1926 and 1989 1,127,000 people left Ireland. Since 1980 240,000 of our people have left."

5 JULY 1991

## CHEEVERSTOWN HOUSE

"This House has a responsibility to the taxpayer and, most of all, a responsibility to respond to the harrowing tales of woe one hears from parents who have children who are in need of the kind of respite that Cheeverstown House offers. While there is that need in the community half of this facility is lying idle. The Minister has to act and all parties in the House will support that position."

1 MAY 1991

## PART-TIME WORKERS

"When the Workers' Party brought in their Bill on part-time workers the Minister gave a commitment to bring forward a Bill and he has done so. I accept the Minister's good faith but this side of the house clearly signalled reservations. Some of the most serious exploitation takes place and women are at their more vulnerable in the contract agency sector where the phenomenon of part-time work is so endemic. The fact that the Minister has said that this Bill will not try to tackle the problems facing agency and contract workers will leave a great share of the marketplace untouched."

15 MARCH 1991

## CLIMATE!

"The relevant indicators for 1990 alone make quite startling reading for the orthodox school of economics, I would have thought, with growth rate almost 6 per cent, balance of payments surplus £800m., surplus of exports over imports £1.922 billion and inflation 3.4%. What more can one do in terms of creating the right climate? The climate has been as near ideal as we are likely to get, yet where are the jobs?"

18 DECEMBER 1990

## STOCK EXCHANGE LEAK

"This is not the first occasion on which some commercial interests with the right political track record seem to be able to secure access to sensitive information and to use their political contacts to make greater profits."

13 MARCH 1991



## EDUCATION

"The section on Education shows that teachers and parents have taught Fianna Fail some lessons. The PESP will have some small effect on class size (the first positive change since 1982), physical condition of schools should improve and the promise of an eventual 6 year cycle at second level is welcome."

However, even here all is not as it would seem....

At the moment 3 in every 4 fee-charging schools have a sanctioned 6 years cycle but only 1 in 5 of all "free-scheme" schools. All students now at second level will not benefit.

There is no extra funding for Adult Education and all promises are vague and to be handled 'within available resources'."

20 FEBRUARY 1991

## THE BUDGET

"In many ways this is a 'stay as you are' budget which is all very well if one is happy where they are, but approximately one-third of our people are not allowed to participate in the economy in any manner consistent with a decent standard of living. If they had any expectations of some improvements in this budget they would have been very severely disappointed indeed."

31 JANUARY 1991



## MEAT INDUSTRY

"Evidence has been uncovered of substantial fraud involving EC payments, the extent of which is unknown but some reports put it as high as £40 million. Fraud in the meat industry is not a victimless crime. Apart from the implications for price and quality of meat, the victims are the taxpayers who must foot the bill not to mention the poor and the unemployed who could benefit if the money was used for job creation or social purposes rather than into the coffers of the beef barons."

The cattle and beef sector accounts for 36 per cent of gross agricultural output and contributes almost 10 per cent to GDP.

The scale of the beef industry is, therefore, very significant, sustaining almost 100,000 farmers in the produc-

tion of cattle and employing an estimated 5,000 workers in meat processing. That is the context of this debate and that is what is being put at risk unless we can finally put these allegations to bed.

I hope the resources will be made available to the tribunal....

The focus should be on identifying glaring and obvious weaknesses in the system, on protecting taxpayers' money and on the need to make recommendations to put in place systems that maintain the high reputation of our food exports."

28 AUGUST 1990  
+ 15 MAY 1991

## EUROPEAN BANK

"The Workers' Party fully support the creation of a pan-European institution to promote the economic regeneration of Eastern Europe and which encourages increased trade on mutually beneficial terms."

This is not to suggest that the requirements are the same. No meaningful comparison can be drawn between the relatively sound and modern economy of, say, Czechoslovakia and the appalling legacy of the dictatorship in Romania where, the treatment of children in orphanages is a total betrayal of the humanitarian ethos of socialism.

Ultimately the best economic assistance encourages trade on mutually beneficial terms.

We have already seen an excellent example of this through the Aer Rianta-Aeroflot link up. In that regard we should perhaps seek to expand the role of Shannon Airport, particularly at a time when there is increasing pressure by the major European and US airlines to by-pass Shannon on the transatlantic routes."

12 FEBRUARY 1991

## HOUSE MAINTENANCE

"There is no Estates management policy in Tallaght and very little care is taken in the allocation of these houses. In addition, there is a very defective maintenance policy and there are severe environmental problems in the area."

15 MAY 1991

## BANK CHARGES

"Is the Minister concerned...that the Banks' Irish customers will be expected to continue to pay higher and ever increasing charges to fund the Banks' unsuccessful acquisitions and ventures abroad?"

28 MAY 1991

...a selection of excerpts  
from Dáil debates.





# Still forcing the pace!



The Workers' Party does the work —  
Fianna Fáil claims the credit!

## ADVICE CENTRES

Each Saturday	2 pm – 3 pm TWS, Main Street, Tallaght
Third Saturday	1 pm – 2 pm Rathcoole Community Centre
Fourth Saturday	12 noon – 1 pm The Furry Bog, Whitechurch
First Monday	11 am – 12 pm Laurels Public House, Clondalkin
Third Monday	7.30 – 8.30 pm Colloseum, St. James's Road, Greenhills
First Saturday	12 noon – 1 pm Doctor's Surgery, 56 Rossfield Pk
Third Monday	11 am – 12 noon Aherne's Pub, Old Bawn Road

or phone the Dáil Office 789911

Since our cartoon of last year, the FF/PD Coalition has backpedalled on the Regional Hospital. No prizes for guessing that it will be promised at the next General Election (like it was in 1989). With your support, The Workers' Party will keep them under pressure to provide more of the promised local amenities.

## Join Us!

Why not help in working for a fairer society? If interested in helping, or in joining The Workers' Party, contact Pat Rabbitte TD, Leinster House, Dublin 2.

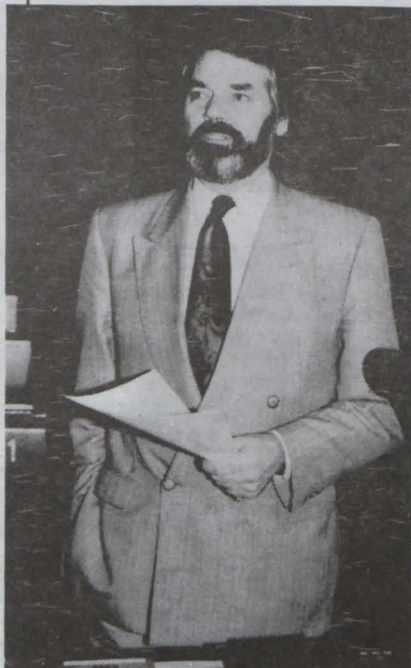
## Tomorrow's People

*Tomorrow's People* is The Workers' Party newspaper. For a good read and a fresh look at current issues, subscribe to *Tomorrow's People*.

## Scoil Lán-Ghaelach

Tá meán-scoil lán-Ghaelach ag teastáil i dTamlacht, go háirithe do na daltaí atá ag fágáil Scoil Santain agus Scoil Chaitlín Maude. Tá borradh nua tagtha ar an oideachas tré Ghaeilge agus tá Pat Rabbitte ag iarraidh ar an Aire Oideachais an scoil nua seo a chur ar fáil.

## Proinsias De Rossa – Your Voice in Europe



More and more, decisions made in Brussels and Strasburg affect our work, our security, our living standards and our environment. Since his election to the European Parliament Proinsias De Rossa has been active in monitoring and dealing with these issues and in seeking a better deal for Dublin and Ireland.

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy offers the opportunity for the transfer of funds for urban development and job creation and for cheaper food prices. Proinsias has proposed that these reforms be linked to job generation in peripheral regions such as Ireland.

He has argued that the Dublin Region should remain an Objective 1 (highest priority) area for Regional Development Fund purposes, and submitted an amendment to this effect to a recent European Report on Ireland.

He has tackled many issues ignored by other Irish MEPs, demanded closure of Sellafield, sought an end to dumping of toxic waste in our seas and argued for a non-aggressive security policy in the EC.

He has called for improved regulations to protect workers' and citizens' rights.

Latest statistics from the European Parliament show Proinsias De Rossa to be one of the most active of Irish MEPs – tabling 211 resolutions, submitting 290 questions and speaking 54 times in European Parliament debates since his election just two years ago. More importantly he is working to ensure that changes taking place in Europe will benefit its citizens and that regions such as Ireland are allocated a fair share of EC resources.